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HORACE WALPOLE'S MEMOIRS OF THE REIGN OF GEORGE THE THIRD, I.

WHAT may be called the Whig view of the reign of George III. is as familiar to Americans as the traditional notion of the Revolution, of which it is, indeed, an integral part: the king ascended the throne with the fixed intention of overthrowing English constitutional liberty and of restoring the prerogative to its former high position; in this attempt he was steadily supported by the Scots and the Tories, and resisted as steadily by the Whigs; the attempt to subject the colonies to the crown was part of this deep-laid scheme; nevertheless, the king failed finally because of the assistance which the Whigs in America gave to their brethren in England, and thus, as Pitt professed to have conquered America in Germany, English patriots vanquished their king at Yorktown. An interpretation so flattering to national pride was bound to find ready acceptance in America, while to the English Whigs of the Reform Bill period it was almost equally attractive; it hardly needed the solemn pronouncements of Bancroft or the glitter of Macaulay's rhetoric to give it all the appearance of an axiomatic truth.

The theory is to be found, of course, in newspapers and party pamphlets from the time of the Stamp Act. These, however, even Whig historians would regard with suspicious eye. But in 1845, the year after Macaulay's second essay on Chatham appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, there was published in England a work which seemed to give to the Whig contention the support of solid contemporary evidence, inasmuch as it indicated that the designs of the king were apparent to unprejudiced observers from the beginning of his reign. Horace Walpole's *Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Third* professed to have been written between the years 1766 and 1772. The author was a member of Parliament, a friend of men in power and out, a close observer, an indefatigable notetaker, a lively gossip, and a successful ferreter-out of secrets. He pretended to be indifferent to all parties, a mere dabbler in bric-a-brac who recorded impartially, for the edification of posterity, the tale of passing events. And yet the theory of the *Memoirs*, in so far as they present any general interpretation of the reign, is the Whig theory; and one might suppose, if the mere matter of chronology

did not forbid it, that Macaulay came fresh from reading Walpole when he sat down to write the essay on Chatham.¹

It is quite true that Walpole was not accepted as an oracle by the Whigs any more than by the Tories. Macaulay, at least, would scarcely have relished being told that his own work embodied the opinions of the man whom he had already called a fool in as many balanced sentences as his copious vocabulary could furnish forth.² Of the Memoirs themselves, indeed, he said nothing, leaving it to the amiable Croker to tell the world that Walpole was actuated by nothing but vanity and cupidity, and that he wrote, besides, in bad temper.³ Nevertheless, the Memoirs were favorably reviewed in *Blackwood's*⁴ at the time of their publication, and half a century later Leslie Stephen took occasion to call them "good old-fashioned history", comparing them, to their great advantage, with the "fashion now prevalent, in which six portly folios are allotted to a year, and an event takes longer to describe than to occur".⁵ A new edition of the Memoirs in 1894,⁶ and of the letters in 1903,⁷ together with the reviews they called forth, have in a measure completed the rehabilitation of Walpole's works as historical sources of first-rate importance. I believe that they are so indeed. Whether the letters are worth more or less, in that respect, than the Memoirs is perhaps an open question, but one which need not be considered here. It may, however, be worth while to consider whether the Memoirs, since they contain what I have called the Whig view of the reign of George III., are precisely what they profess to be. To what extent are they contemporaneous with the events they chronicle?

The memoirs cover the period from the accession of George III., October 25, 1760, to the death of the princess dowager in 1772. Walpole says he began the Memoirs August 18, 1766.⁸ During the

¹ Macaulay was of course familiar with Walpole's letters, which, after 1775, express the Whig view even more clearly than the Memoirs. Macaulay's famous saying about Tories being fools may have come from Walpole. "A Whig may be a fool, a Tory must be so", etc. *Letters*, X. 273. Leslie Stephen asserts that much of Walpole's light has been "transfused" through the pages of Macaulay. *Hours in a Library*, II. 156.

² Cf. Macaulay's review of the letters to Mann. *Essays* (Longmans, 1898), II. 314.

³ *Quarterly Review*, LXXVII. 136.

⁴ LVII. 353.

⁵ *Hours in a Library*, II. 154.

⁶ By G. F. Russell Barker, in four volumes. (London: Lawrence and Bullen; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.) The citations in this article are to this edition.

⁷ By Mrs. Paget Toynbee, in sixteen volumes. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1903-1905.) The citations in this article are to this edition.

⁸ *Notes of my Life*, printed in the preface of Mrs. Paget Toynbee's edition of the *Letters*.

next two years he did little, apparently, for at the close of 1768 he was still writing the first volume, having brought the narrative down only to March, 1764.⁹ In January, 1769, the second volume was under way, and he was occupied with the events of the winter of 1765.¹⁰ In July and August of 1769, we are told, he "finished two more books of my *Memoirs* for the years 1765, 1766".¹¹ In October, 1769, he was narrating the events of March, 1767, having nearly completed the second volume.¹² When he reached the end of the first Parliament of George III., March, 1768, which brought him to the end of chapter six of volume three, Walpole threw the work aside, having tired of it, and he did not know whether he would ever take it up again.¹³ However, he did take it up again after the peace with Spain in 1771,¹⁴ and completed the work sometime in 1772.¹⁵ The larger part of the original draft was thus written in 1768-1769 and 1771-1772; and the editors¹⁶ have left us to infer that the printed *Memoirs* are the same as the original draft which Walpole completed at that time. Such, however, is not the case. The original draft was revised as late as 1784, and evidence of this fact, which is as plain as printed dates can make it, is scattered from one end of the book to the other.

In the first place, many of the foot-notes with which Walpole supplemented the text allude to events that enable us to fix their composition subsequent to the composition of the original draft: some refer to dates earlier than 1772 but later than the date of the composition of the particular part of the text to which they are appended;¹⁷ many refer to events subsequent to the year 1772; as, for example, to 1773, 1774, or 1775,¹⁸ to the entrance of France into the American war,¹⁹ to the loss of the colonies, or to the years 1783-

⁹ *Memoirs*, I. 310.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, II. 53.

¹¹ *Notes of my Life*.

¹² *Memoirs*, II. 308.

¹³ *Ibid.*, III. 107.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

¹⁵ *Notes of my Life*.

¹⁶ The *Memoirs* were first edited by Denis Le Marchant, who says in his preface that they were "printed exactly as the author left them, except that it has been thought right to suppress a few passages of indecent tendency". Mr. Barker printed his edition from the Le Marchant text and inserted most of the notes of Le Marchant. Yet he says nothing as to the time of writing the *Memoirs* except that "Walpole commenced the task of writing the *Memoirs* . . . on 18th August 1766, and finished them in 1772." Preface, p. xx.

¹⁷ *Memoirs*, I. 139, 242, 281, 289; II. 11, 67.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, I. 113, 183; II. 191, 231, 237, 272, 280, 301; III. 24; IV. 13, 167, 169.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, II. 63; III. 253.

1784,²⁰ and there is one note that refers to the year 1786,²¹ and two that refer to the year 1788.²²

The revision of the *Memoirs* was not confined to the notes, however. In the third volume, page 24, there is a note in which Walpole says that the attempt to impose taxes on America has caused a civil war there, "whence is just arrived notice of the first bloodshed, as I transcribe these *Memoirs*—in June, 1775". In volume four, page 83, there is the following note: "This paragraph, from the words *and was disabled*, was added in July, 1784." These are the only references to any revision of the *Memoirs* that Walpole himself anywhere makes; and it might be inferred, therefore, that he simply copied out the original draft in 1775 and added part of a paragraph and some notes in 1784. But it is clear that the single paragraph which Walpole says was inserted in 1784 is not the only one inserted at that time, and it is probable that some insertions were made during the "transcribing" of 1775. Let us establish these points.

First, there are a number of passages, inserted after the original draft was finished in 1772, that may have been inserted in 1775. Volume one, page 16: "the revenues of the Crown were so soon squandered in purchasing dependants, that architecture, the darling art of Lord Bute, was contracted from the erection of a new palace to altering a single door-case in the drawing-room at St. James's." This part of the *Memoirs* was originally written in 1766, yet the palace which the king designed to build was not given up till 1771, as Walpole himself says in volume four, page 205. Volume one, page 164, originally written before 1769, contains a reference to Lord Kinnoul, who "came no more to London till the year 1770". Volume two, page 291: Lord Chatham "appeared no more in the House of Lords, really becoming that invisible and inaccessible divinity which Burke has described". This I suppose to refer to the speech on American Taxation, in which Burke paid his famous tribute to Lord Chatham. Volume three, page 21: Townshend's revenue plan of March, 1767, was adopted by the House "before it had been well weighed, and the fatal consequences of which did not break out till six years after". Volume four, page 18: "In 1775, on the *Princesse de Lamballe* being placed above the *Princesse de Chimay*", etc.

Second, the paragraph which Walpole takes pains to specify as being added in 1784 is not the only one that was added at that time. Volume four, page 54: "Lord North's conduct in the American war

²⁰ *Memoirs*, I. 305; II. 116, 242, 321; III. 24; IV. 69, 88, 92, 118, 142, 149, 154.

²¹ *Ibid.*, I. 305.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 86.

displayed all these features. He engaged in it against his opinion, and yet without reluctance. He managed it without foresight or address, and was neither ashamed when it miscarried, nor dispirited when the Crown itself became endangered by the additional war with France." Volume four, page 76: the king "not only preferred his personal influence to that of England, but risked, exposed, and lost a most important portion of his dominions". Volume four, page 85: "the subsequent transactions to the commencement of the new Parliament in 1784 have but corroborated my ideas. . . . the overt acts of the American war have but too sadly realized the more problematic suspicions I had entertained of the evil designs of the Court . . . and a more undisguised attempt in the Crown of governing independently having distinguished the year 1784", etc. Volume four, page 157: the king "lost his dominions in America . . . by aiming at despotism in England". Volume four, page 163: the court, "by a series of wretched measures . . . lost at once our colonies in America, and the empire of the ocean everywhere".

It is thus clear that Walpole inserted new matter in the Memoirs after the completion of the original draft in 1772. But we do not yet know whether he inserted much or little, or whether the insertions changed the character of the Memoirs in any important respect. These questions are more important than the questions already considered, as well as more difficult to answer. My own opinion is that the additions, though not considerable in amount perhaps, modified in an important way the interpretation of the reign of George III. embodied in the original draft. Besides the passages quoted above, there are others that express opinions very different from those we know Walpole held at the time the original draft was written; and in the case of some of these passages there is internal evidence confirming the supposition that they were inserted at a later time. These passages cannot be considered intelligently, however, until we know, independently of the Memoirs, what Walpole's opinions were at the time when he was writing the original draft and at the time when he was making the revision. Fortunately, Walpole was a confirmed letter-writer, and his letters, in the elaborate new edition of Mrs. Paget Toynbee, constitute what is practically a daily journal of events and of Walpole's opinions about them. It will be well, therefore, to sketch briefly, on the basis of the letters, what may be called the development of Walpole's political opinions—his strictly contemporaneous interpretation of the events of the reign of George III. But before doing this, it will not be out of place, since the letters are to furnish the material, to say a few words about the letters themselves as reliable sources of information.

Walpole says in one place that he does not write letters for amusement, but in expectation of returns.²³ Still, as he got few and unsatisfactory returns, the statement must be discounted. He wrote letters partly in expectation of returns no doubt, but also partly for amusement, and partly to produce an effect: it pleased him not so much to communicate information to his friends as to convince them that he knew a great deal worth communicating, and knew it at a very early hour—before it happened, if possible. This very desire, of course, inclined him to be accurate: he liked to tell his friends—Conway, and Hertford, and Sir Horace Mann—what they ought to do, and then have it turn out afterward that they ought in fact to have done just that. “Recollect that I understand this country pretty well,—attend closely to what passes,—have very good intelligence,—and know the characters of the actors thoroughly”, he writes to Hertford.²⁴ Yet he warns him, too: “I tell you what I *hear*, and do not answer for truth but when I tell you what I *know*.”²⁵ And the fact is that the letters no less than the Memoirs must be used with some caution. Walpole more than most people perhaps regarded the person to whom he was writing and not infrequently wrote what was in his correspondent’s mind to hear rather than what, strictly, was in his own to say. The fulsome letters to Voltaire are instances in point.²⁶ They are what Walpole himself called “civil” letters.²⁷ The ethics of letter-writing was indeed not high in the eighteenth century, and Walpole was not above forging the name of the King of Prussia for the purpose of playing what would now be regarded, at the very least, as a contemptible practical joke on Rousseau.²⁸ To be sure, these were not his friends. But even in his letters to Sir Horace Mann he kept in mind the official connections of that gentleman, and often wrote accordingly.²⁹ The most important consideration, however, in this respect is the insecurity of the public post of that day. “I firmly believe every tittle I have uttered”, he writes to Mann.³⁰ “Never have I deceived you

²³ *Letters*, V. 165.

²⁴ May 24, 1765. *Ibid.*, VI. 244.

²⁵ April 5, 1764. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, VII. 199, 206.

²⁷ *Notes of my Life*. In a letter to Thomas Walpole, he says that the return of Temple “will greatly facilitate everything”. *Letters*, VII. 24. This was intended for the eye of William Pitt. But *cf.* the letter to Mann. *Ibid.*, VII. 32. Walpole wrote, in like manner, “civil” letters to Hume, Grafton, Newcastle, and others. *Cf. ibid.*, V. 382; VI. 301, 332; X. 27.

²⁸ For Walpole’s justification of the letter, see *Letters*, VII. 31, 66, 68. The affair is treated at length by Morley. *Rousseau*, II. 287.

²⁹ *Letters*, V. 77; VI. 64; IX. 276.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, X. 435.

knowingly. I mean, when I have written by a safe hand—by the post, one colours over some things, even because one's letters may be opened by foreign enemies." On the accession of Conway to office, he writes joyously:³¹ "This is the first moment that I have enjoyed *the liberty of the post* for these three years. We may say what we will; I may launch out, and even *you* need not be discreet, when our letters pass through *Mr. Conway's office*." The letters contain ample evidence, indeed, that Walpole wrote freely on political matters only when his letters were conveyed by private hand.³²

With these facts in mind, one may gather from the letters an accurate enough idea of Walpole's political opinions. Not much credit need be given to the statement, often repeated, that he cares nothing about politics, is indifferent to both parties, and wishes only to retire to Strawberry and solitude. It is plain that he cannot retire, except when the gout compels him, but must be always running up to London when Parliament is in session. The son of Robert Walpole loved "big politics" and "thundering revolutions", and would have liked nothing better than to be in the centre of the stage.³³ But he was not in the centre of the stage—was hardly, except once, even in the wings—and not being there, was determined above everything that no one should suppose he cared two straws about it. In fact, Walpole was an Englishman to the core, and for what he considered the welfare of England he cared immensely—more, perhaps, than he was himself aware.³⁴

The welfare of England, indeed, in Walpole's eyes, was often threatened. England had always her evil genius, and her history was mainly a decline and fall from the golden age of Sir Robert's administration.³⁵ During the reign of George II., this evil genius was the house of Pelham, which had replaced the house of Walpole. Therefore he admired Pitt as minister, though he had had only sar-

³¹ *Letters*, VI. 265.

³² See especially the long letter to Hertford, January 22, 1764. *Ibid.*, V. 437. Cf. with *ibid.*, p. 406. For further evidence on this point, see *ibid.*, V. 77; VI. 2, 8, 20, 66, 95, 110, 112, 139, 175, 176, 214, 224, 230, 241, 246, 357, 362, 371; VII. 151, 199, 351, 548; VIII. 58; IX. 81, 276; X. 309; XI. 449; XII. 118, 195.

³³ *Ibid.*, VII. 2.

³⁴ "I have hoped or feared; but always in the same spirit—the liberty and happiness of England." *Ibid.*, X. 233. "How many wretches have I lived to see England escape! Thank God I am not philosopher enough not to be grateful for it." *Ibid.*, VI. 446. "Two years ago I meditated leaving England if it was enslaved. I have no such thought now. I will steal into its bosom when my hour comes, and love it to the last." *Ibid.*, X. 285. Many such quotations could be made. Cf. *ibid.*, V. 259; VII. 29, 193, 363.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, VIII. 345; X. 284, 314, 315, 317, 325, 335; XI. 102; XII. 195, 405; XIII. 87, 312, 313.

casms for Pitt as "Patriot", because Pitt seemed inclined to ride rough-shod over the house of Pelham and the whole corrupt aristocracy. For the same reason the attitude of "Leicester House" towards the old king and his ministers was highly amusing. It is thus no gloomy prospect that opens up to Walpole at the accession of George III.³⁶ The existence of a "favorite" does not alarm him;³⁷ and as for the "ambitious designing woman" whom we read of in the *Memoirs*, why, he thinks "no petticoat ever governed less; it is left at Leicester House."³⁸ If the gracious young king, who has such "good dispositions",³⁹ can accomplish what Pitt has only begun, all will be well.⁴⁰ And how much better if he can do this and make peace at the same time; peace is the dearest wish of his heart, and he will be satisfied with even a bad one.⁴¹ Best of all, if the house of Pelham is broken, may not the house of Walpole again count for something?⁴²

From the end of 1762 this bright prospect begins to cloud over a little. The preparations of Lord Bute for carrying the peace do not please him. He cannot see into the storm, is sorry Fox has taken position, thinks Bute's "game" not so easy, and sees him tottering to his fall.⁴³ So little inclination did the administration show towards the house of Walpole that Walpole's own exchequer bills were delayed;⁴⁴ and Fox, failing to bribe him for his vote on the peace, granted the reversion of his place to "young Martin".⁴⁵ Still, Walpole can but rejoice, since peace is made.⁴⁶ In the humiliation of Devonshire, and the drastic treatment of Newcastle's friends, he sniffs "prerogative" to be sure,⁴⁷ but he has long seen the growing power of the aristocracy, and, while not wishing to have the king predominate, is convinced that only the crown can curb the House of Lords, and consoles himself with the thought that perhaps it will

³⁶ "The truth was, I had been civilly treated on the King's accession, and had so much disliked Newcastle and Hardwicke, that few men were better pleased than myself to see a new administration." *Memoirs*, I, 167.

³⁷ *Letters*, IV, 442, 447, 449; V, 2, 11, 16, 29, 35, 211, 213, 218.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, IV, 455.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, V, 46. "The King is good and amiable in everything he does." *Ibid.*, 8; see also, *ibid.*, IV, 449, 455; V, 12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, IV, 442, 447, 449, 453, 455; V, 3, 9, 10, 12, 47, 141, 207, 208.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, V, 47, 48, 71, 73, 74, 83, 98, 114, 123, 124, 141, 144, 148, 164, 210.

⁴² *Ibid.*, V, 2, 11, 12, 13, 27, 30, 34. Walpole doubtless expected recognition for Waldegrave, who was the king's tutor when Prince of Wales, and a relation of Walpole. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 306, 308.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, V, 261-267, 278, 290.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 288, 292.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 275, 309. Cf. *Memoirs*, I, 168, 169.

⁴⁶ *Letters*, V, 271.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 271, 273, 283.

at last be able to do so.⁴⁸ In any case, there is no danger from prerogative in the hands of men like Bute and Fox, since the plans of five months have been overthrown by a fortnight's panic.⁴⁹ Walpole's ill-humor at this time is not due to any fear for the constitution, but to real or fancied affronts which the ministers had put upon him. In the time of the Wilkes affair of 1763-1764, he nevertheless has his revenge. He is in the best of spirits, and the whole situation appeals to him as subject for Homeric laughter.⁵⁰ To be sure, he would die for the privileges of the House of Commons, and for the liberty of the press; the principle involved is a vital one;⁵¹ but the opposition is so united and the ministry so divided and incompetent that there is not the least danger of arbitrary power.⁵² The letters at this time are a veritable paean of victory; it is a victory in a factional squabble, with serious constitutional questions looming up no doubt, but still low on the horizon and giving little concern.

In April, 1764, the political sky is again overcast. Whig principles are at stake, as they were in 1688.⁵³ But it is not American affairs, which he understands no more than Hebrew,⁵⁴ that occasion the danger; it is the dismissal of Conway for his vote on general warrants.⁵⁵ From now on, Grenville is the man of "rotten heart",⁵⁶ whose ruin Walpole will gladly see. Prerogative is so far from being a danger that it is itself in danger. The Regency Bill arrayed Bute and Holland against Grenville and Bedford, and Walpole hopes Bute will win—would, if he were Bute, deliver himself bound hand and foot to Pitt rather than submit to such wretches as Grenville.⁵⁷ He sees with apprehension all the great families arrayed on one side or the other. It is again a scene of Bohuns, Montforts, and Plantagenets.⁵⁸ In the midst of these struggles the king is insulted and his family disgraced.⁵⁹ The mob rises and civil war threatens.⁶⁰ It is not the prerogative but the aristocracy and the mob that Walpole fears: prerogative is "grown so tame that you may stroke him".⁶¹

⁴⁸ *Letters*, V. 273.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 301, 304, 312.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 294, 320, 322, 389, 391, 396.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 384, 400.

⁵² *Ibid.*, V. 452, *cf.* 438; VI. 7, 12.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, VI. 97.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 168, 186.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 61, 117.

⁵⁶ Expression used in the *Memoirs*, I. 215. *Cf.* *Letters*, V. 437.

⁵⁷ *Letters*, VI. 214, 219-223, 225-228, 229, 231.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 247, 249, 250.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 238-241, 243.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

In July, 1765, the "great and happy change" to the Rockingham ministry is effected.⁶² The four tyrants are gone,⁶³ and Walpole, having worked night and day to get his friends in, runs off to Paris for a holiday, sore indeed that he has no recognition for his pains, but satisfied at least that the constitution is in safe hands.⁶⁴ True, Pitt does strange things, such as declaring against the right of Parliament to tax America,⁶⁵ and Bute shows a tendency at times to negotiate with Grenville.⁶⁶ But on the whole Bute and the king remain firm for the ministry, and when Pitt comes in the prospect for a strong and stable government is excellent.⁶⁷ The repeal of the Stamp Act pleases Walpole because it is "satisfactory for the Ministry" and because it puts Grenville "in the mire".⁶⁸ At the end of 1767, in spite of "unpleasing" accounts from America—Massachusetts Bay having "irreverently" assumed the powers of Parliament⁶⁹—and although Rockingham stupidly joins the rogue Grenville,⁷⁰ and Temple has a long foot for kicking up a dust,⁷¹ the ministry is nevertheless still firm, opposition "scarce barks", America is "pacified";⁷² these times, in fact, interesting now, will hereafter appear "most inconsiderable".⁷³

The next year Wilkes reappears. Walpole thinks he will sink in contempt, but still the mob spirit waxes strong, and he is sorry to see a wealthy nation running riot.⁷⁴ America, too, is a "disagreeable prospect", but he never reads the reports and is glad to have nothing to do with that affair.⁷⁵ In 1769 Wilkes is finally expelled and Walpole sees controversies of a hundred years ago revive.⁷⁶ In May Wilkes seems altogether forgotten, but in November and December the rage for petitioning brings him to the front again, and Walpole is once more exercised for the safety of the constitution, which the mob is now led on to destroy. Yet he consoles himself with the thought that he has seen the Pretender at Derby, and the Lords striding to power at the close of the last reign and the king

⁶² *Letters*, VI. 264.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 266, 294, 303, 311, 330, 337, 343, 351, 362-364.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 417, 418, 421.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, VII. 30, 32, 78, 84, 86, 89, 92, 95, 96.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, VI. 445, 446.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, VII. 100, 102.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 119, 122, 123, 141, 147.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 176, 184, 186, 187, 188, 196, 197, 204.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 208, 217, 226, 235, 247.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 253, 257, 268.

at the beginning of this; and why should the people, less formidable than either the king or the aristocracy, succeed where they have failed? These vacillations doubtless only show the excellent poise of the constitution after all.⁷⁷ And so, sure enough, it turned out. Chatham can no longer charm in the Lords; opposition fails likewise in the Commons; the mighty bluster of petitions ends happily, and civil war gives place to subscription masquerades.⁷⁸

Through the years 1771-1772, Walpole was convinced that the safety of the constitution depended upon the success of the court. With the accession of Lord North in February, 1770, the prospect was much improved. Of Lord North, indeed, Walpole has a high opinion: he is active, assiduous, resolute, and fitted to deal with mankind; he has "very good parts, quickness, great knowledge"; he sees that it is much easier "for a King of England to disarm the minds of his subjects than their hands".⁷⁹ In fact North carried them through a serious crisis, and before the end of 1770 Walpole was able to record with pleasure that the spirit of martyrdom was pretty well burnt out, that Wilkes had finally failed, and that the opposition was crumbling away.⁸⁰ The treaty with Spain "is an epoch; and puts a total end to all our preceding histories".⁸¹ "For my part, I reckon the volume quite shut in which I took any interest. The succeeding world is young, new, and half unknown to me."⁸² "Thus all our storms are blown over, except in Ireland, and that does not seem to threaten much. . . . What ten years of vexation might have been avoided if folks would have adhered to my father's maxim of *Quieta non movere!*"⁸³ Through the quiet years from 1771 to 1773 Walpole maintains the same attitude. In June, 1773, he hopes Lord North will not resign, for "he is an honest and a moderate man".⁸⁴ The "insurrection in the Massachusetts" concerns him not at all; he cares only for the present, and the present is very calm.⁸⁵ As late as February, 1774, he can say no more than that "if all the black slaves were in rebellion, I should have no doubt in choosing my side, but I scarce wish perfect freedom to merchants who are the bloodiest of all tyrants."⁸⁶

⁷⁷ *Letters*, VII. 280, 328, 343, 345, 347.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 249, 349, 359, 366.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 371, cf. 361-363, 368, 372, 375-378.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 383, 386, 387, 418-420.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, VIII. 12.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 419.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 423.

From this account of Walpole's political opinions during the time he was writing the original draft of the Memoirs, there emerge, I think, four important points. (1) Walpole was an old-fashioned Whig,⁸⁷ who believed that the safety of the state depended upon maintaining a proper balance between the three parts of the constitution—king, Lords, and Commons. He feared anything which tended to disturb this balance. (2) He had no settled convictions during this period that either king, Lords, or Commons was steadily growing in power; it was now the crown, now the aristocracy, and now the mob that he feared. (3) So far from perceiving any settled plan on the part of the king for increasing the prerogative, the danger from the crown was the least of the three; the only time the crown seemed to predominate was in 1762–1763, before he began to write the Memoirs; during the whole time he was writing the Memoirs, what he most feared was the factional strife of the great families on the one hand, and the mob spirit stirred up by the merchants or intriguing politicians on the other. The king was to be pitied for his weakness rather than feared for his strength. (4) Walpole's vacillation in these matters was due in no small measure to personal interests. The man or faction that stood in the way of what he wanted for his friends, or thought necessary for any reason, became straightway a danger to the constitution; the same man or faction aiding, was its friend. Of all his fears and animosities, the king, Bute, the Scots, the Tories, the princess, and Lord North were on the whole the least.

With the outbreak of the American war, however, there came a striking change in Walpole's point of view. It was in June, 1775, when he reached page 24 of the third volume in the "transcribing" of 1775 that he learned of the first bloodshed. This is almost precisely the period when he first took a definite stand as to that event; and from this date his opinions never change.⁸⁸ He regards the Americans as his countrymen who are fighting for liberty against the attempt of the king, aided by the Scots and the Tories, to establish despotism over the whole empire. The house of Hanover is playing the same game that the house of Stuart formerly tried to play. The king has staked all against the hope of absolute power, and the nation, deluded by the ministry, is working for its own ruin.

⁸⁷ Walpole called himself an old-fashioned Whig. *Letters*, X. 262, 273; XII. 284, 285; XIII. 86.

⁸⁸ The first letter in the decided tone that prevails throughout the war is to Mann, September, 11, 1775. "What a paragraph of blood is there!", etc. *Letters*, IX. 247. Cf. this with the earlier letters of 1774 and 1775. *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 99, 106, 109, 127, 133, 153, 227.

Whether the government succeeded or failed, the result would be ruin: in the one case, liberty was gone; in the other, commercial empire. He blushes to be an Englishman, a countryman of the majority, and can no longer love what does not deserve esteem. To have squandered away such an empire for the hope of despotic power was the maddest project yet attempted by English kings; and when America wins, Walpole rejoices that she at least will be free though England may not be. The famous resolution of April 6, 1780, he adopts as a part of his Revolution creed, and would have added to Magna Carta that whenever the influence of the crown "has increased and is increasing, it ought to be diminished".⁸⁹ During the eight years of the war these ideas are repeated over and over again, and in a tone of bitterness and reviling that not infrequently borders on frenzy. The danger from the aristocracy and the mob has altogether disappeared; the king and his tools, the Scots, the Tories, and the clergy, now loom so large that they fill the entire field of vision.⁹⁰

We may now proceed to examine some passages in the *Memoirs* for the purpose of determining the probable extent of the revision. It is obvious to begin with that the opinions expressed in the letters will be of use only with respect to the revision of 1784, since there was no marked change in Walpole's opinions until after the revision of 1775 had been largely accomplished.⁹¹ But wherever opinions in the *Memoirs* disagree with those of the letters before 1775, and at the same time correspond closely with the opinions of the letters after 1775, it may be assumed that the passage in question was inserted during the revision of 1784, both because the letters after 1775 differ so greatly from those before that date, and because the passages in the *Memoirs* which we know were inserted in 1784 do in fact correspond closely with the letters of the later date. Now it will be recalled that all the passages which we know positively to have been inserted in 1784 are found in the fourth volume. This fact suggests that possibly the revision of 1784 was confined to that volume. It will be well, therefore, to take up those passages in the last volume that show evidence of revision, before taking up any in the first three.

⁸⁹ *Letters*, XI. 149.

⁹⁰ The following references are a few of the many that might be given. *Ibid.*, IX. 244, 247, 266, 274, 278, 342, 369; X. 9, 10, 49, 129, 163, 166, 191, 262, 421, 432; XI. 30, 43, 121, 149, 222, 232, 414; XII. 72, 141, 178, 183, 195, 204, 320, 412; XIII. 86, 131, 255. The effect of the war upon Walpole's opinion of North, Bute, Burke, Pitt, and especially of everything Scotch, may be seen in the following. *Ibid.*, X. 207, 233, 260, 284, 311, 328; XI. 21, 30, 222, 235, 376, 384; XII. 72, 118, 183, 245, 288, 420.

⁹¹ Recall that Walpole had reached page 24 of volume three in the first revision, in June, 1775. *Memoirs*, III. 24. And for his opinion on the war at that time, see references given in note 88 above.

One of the most striking changes in Walpole's opinions was in respect to Lord North, and the Memoirs reflect this change so perfectly that one has little difficulty in distinguishing the later insertions from the original draft. It is at page 50 of the fourth volume that Walpole first takes up the North ministry, and we find to begin with that "Lord North had neither connections with the nobility, nor popularity with the country, yet he undertook the Government in a manly style." He "plunged boldly into the danger at once. . . . If the Court should be beaten, the King would be at the mercy of the Opposition, or driven to have recourse to the Lords—possibly to the sword. All the resolutions on the Middlesex election would be rescinded, the Parliament dissolved, or the contest reduced to the sole question of prerogative. Yet in the short interval allowed, Lord North . . . the Scotch and the Butists . . . had been so active . . . that at past twelve at night the Court proved victorious." This is precisely in the tone of the letters of 1770—might, indeed, have been copied from them almost word for word.⁹² At page 52, however, Walpole begins a long description of North which, opening with some remarks that might have been part of the original draft, rapidly takes on the tone of 1784. The first nine lines are devoted to a brilliant description of North's personal appearance, which, Walpole says, "disgusted all who judge by appearance, or withhold their approbation till it is courted. But within that rude casket were enclosed many useful talents. He had much wit, good-humour, strong natural sense, assurance, and promptness, both of conception and elocution [execution?]. His ambition had seemed to aspire to the height, yet he was not very ambitious. He was thought interested, yet was not avaricious." All this sounds much like the letters of 1770; but from this point a different tone begins to appear.

He had lent himself readily to all the violences of Mr. Grenville against Wilkes . . . and with equal alacrity had served under the Duke of Grafton . . . It was in truth worth his ambition, though he should rule but a day, to attain the rank of Prime Minister. He . . . seemed to have all necessary activity till he reached the summit. Yet that industry ceased when it became most requisite. He had neither system, nor principles, nor shame; sought neither the favour of the Crown or of the people, but enjoyed the good luck of fortune with a gluttonous epicurism that was equally careless of glory and disgrace. His indolence prevented his forming any plan. His indifference made him leap from one extreme to another; and his insensibility to reproach reconciled him to any contradiction. He proved as indolent as the Duke of Grafton, but . . . he was less hurt at capital disgraces than the Duke had been at trifling difficulties.

Then comes the passage already quoted: "Lord North's conduct in

⁹² *Letters*, VII. 362, 364, 372.

the American war displayed all these features"; and there are two pages more of the same kind of comment.⁹³

Immediately following the description of North, there is a paragraph devoted to the other ministers, which was obviously written at the same time; the tone is very bitter, and Elliot and Dyson are mentioned as having died during the American war. The paragraph at page 57 belongs to the same period, I think, for Walpole mentions with regret that although the "Ministers were teased within, and the King from without, Lord Chatham was always baffled in the Lords, Dowdeswell, Burke, and Grenville in the Commons; nor could Wilkes in the City keep up more than an ineffectual flame." In the letters, on the contrary, Walpole records with pleasure that the court is successful in spite of the efforts of Chatham in the Lords, of the Opposition in the Commons, and of Wilkes in the City.⁹⁴ From this point the *Memoirs* return to the manner of 1771, which prevails until page 70, where the Luttrell affair is summed up as "a speaking lesson to Princes and Ministers not to stretch the strings of prerogative! The whole reign of George the Third was a standing sermon of the same kind; and the mortifications I have been recounting were but slight bruises compared to the wounds he afterwards received."⁹⁵

At page 83 we come to the paragraph to which is appended the note already quoted: "This paragraph, from the words *and was disabled*, was added in July 1784." From the words indicated to the end of the paragraph is a matter of only nine lines. But it is clear that not only these nine lines but the two following paragraphs to the top of page 86 were added at the same time. At the point where Walpole has appended the note quoted above the text reads as follows: "The truth of these observations will appear from some remarks that I think it necessary to make on a pamphlet which made much noise at the time of which I am writing, and the effects of which, though the treatise may be forgotten, are felt at this day, that essay having operated considerably towards dividing . . . the Opposition, which afterwards . . . was reduced to the shadow of resistance, and was disabled", etc. The rest of the paragraph and the two following are devoted to a diatribe on the danger from the prerogative, the insidious designs of the king, and the lessons of the American war. It is only at page 85 that we finally learn the title of the pamphlet about which he wishes to make some remarks. The transition comes in the middle of a paragraph, and is abrupt enough to justify quot-

⁹³ Cf. *Letters*, XII. 245, 420.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, VII. 349.

⁹⁵ Cf. this with *ibid.*, VII. 345.

ing. "He [the author] has written prodigiously too much, if no man shall be the wiser for his writings. He laments not his pains, nor shall deprecate censure if a single person becomes a real patriot, or a better citizen from perusing this work—of which he himself is heartily tired. Mr. Edmund Burke had published, on the 23rd of April, a long and laborious pamphlet, called *Thoughts on the Present Discontents*", etc.⁹⁶

A final example from the fourth volume will suffice. At the top of page 157, Walpole says: "Still was the surprise of mankind extreme, when, on the 16th, it was known that Lord Weymouth had resigned the Seals—a mysterious conduct, increased by his own obstinate silence", etc. In the next few lines, Walpole explains that the resignation probably did not mean that Weymouth would go into opposition, for a lucrative place was at once granted to his brother; "the weak measures of the Court having reduced them to be afraid of a man who had quitted them only from fear". Having said that the resignation was "mysterious", Walpole now says that it was

⁹⁶ The whole paragraph on page 83, the one to which Walpole has appended the note quoted above, shows some indications of having been written partly in 1771-1772, partly in 1775, and partly in 1784. The paragraph begins on page 82, thus: "Those vague and unconcerted attacks wore out the spirit of redress, instead of keeping up its zeal. The several factions hated each other more than they did their common enemies, and most of the leaders of Opposition had, in their time, contributed to the grievances of which they now complained. It must, I think, appear evident, from the scope of the reign, that the Princess Dowager and Lord Bute had assumed the reins with a fixed intention of raising the prerogative", etc. There seems little connection between the last sentence and the one preceding. The theme of the princess and Bute and the prerogative is elaborated for a page, until, in the middle of page 83, we come to the sentence already quoted: "The truth of these observations", etc. Now, the "remarks" which Walpole finally (p. 86) makes on Burke's pamphlet do not confirm the "observations" just made on the princess, Bute, and the prerogative, but go to show that the real evils of which Burke complained—the "Discontents"—had their origin in the factional struggles of the reign of George II.; the "remarks" which Walpole makes, that is, confirm the truth of the first two sentences of the paragraph, that "most of the leaders of Opposition had, in their time, contributed to the grievances of which they now complained." Further, Walpole says that though the pamphlet in question may be forgotten, its effects are "felt at this day". He would hardly have said that, if writing in 1771-1772, for the pamphlet was published in 1770. If, however, Walpole was writing in 1775, the expression would be perfectly natural. I think it very likely that the original draft ran as follows. ". . . and most of the leaders of Opposition had, in their time, contributed to the grievances of which they now complained. [Insertion of 1784 to middle of page 83.] The truth of these observations will appear from some remarks that I think it necessary to make on a pamphlet which made much noise at the time of which I am writing, and the effects of which [insertion of clause 1775] operated considerably towards dividing, and consequently weakening the Opposition. [Clause to "resistance" inserted, 1775.] [Two pages inserted in 1784.] Mr. Edmund Burke had published, on the 23rd of April", etc.

due to fear. The next sentence is: "Such was the complexion of the King's whole conduct", and the rest of the paragraph is devoted to explaining that such conduct ended in the loss of the American colonies. The next paragraph begins: "The secret motives of Lord Weymouth's resignation were these"; and the paragraph is devoted to explaining what he has just said was "mysterious". The explanation given is that Weymouth, thinking that the king favored war with Spain, had gone in for it strongly, and, supported by Wood, had thrown "every damp on the negotiation"; but when North and the Scots, fearing the return of Chatham in case of war, brought the king back to a peace policy, Weymouth, "who would not have hesitated to change his language had he thought peace could be effected, chose rather to waive his ambition than his security", and resigned. Thus Walpole understands perfectly the conduct of Weymouth and knows perfectly that Wood encouraged him in favoring war. From this point, five pages follow, in which Walpole describes Weymouth at length in order that it may be understood hereafter how such a man could be the "hinge on which so important a crisis turned". This digression ends at page 163 with a reference to the loss of "our colonies in America, and the empire of the ocean everywhere". The very next paragraph begins: "I return to Lord Weymouth's resignation." Why return to it, when it had been so fully discussed? For the purpose, apparently, of explaining it once more, or rather of offering a few inconclusive conjectures on the subject. Here we learn that Weymouth, "*Lord Chatham's friends asserted*, had advised making reprisals on Spain: whether authorized or prompted by Wood, and whether to drive the resigner into opposition, I know not. Certain it is, that he had advised recalling Mr. Harris, our Minister, from Madrid", etc. Thus the resignation has again become the "mysterious" affair that Walpole asserted it to be on page 157; Weymouth's attitude on the Spanish war rests on the assertion of Chatham's friends; and Wood's part in the matter is not known. Yet between page 157 and page 163 Walpole has explained all these points with great precision. If we cut out everything from the words "nor should resign with him", on page 157, to the words "*Lord Chatham's friends asserted*", on page 163, and insert after the word "asserted" the words "that he had", the continuity and consistency of the whole is perfect.

These are not the only passages in the fourth volume that show evidence of having been inserted in 1784; but they are the most important ones, and the only ones, perhaps, with respect to which the evidence is altogether convincing.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Cf., for example, *Memoirs*, IV. 1, with *Letters*, VII. 345.

It has now been shown that the *Memoirs* were revised as late as 1784, and that in this revision a considerable amount of new material was inserted in the fourth volume; a more difficult question now presents itself—was the revision of 1784 confined to the fourth volume? To what extent the first three volumes were revised in 1784, and the general significance of the revision as a whole, will be considered in the second part of this article.

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